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NEWS RELEASE

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Schneiderman Announces First Meeting Of County Tick Control Advisory Committee

Suffolk County Legislator Jay Schneiderman (I-Montauk) announced today that the tick control advisory committee will have its first meeting at the Riverhead County Center on Wednesday, July 30. This committee was created to advise the county's division of vector control on developing a plan to reduce tick-borne illnesses in Suffolk County.

"A primary function of government is to protect the health and welfare of residents of Suffolk County," said Legislator Schneiderman. "This committee will help vector control develop a plan to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease and other tick borne-illnesses."

"I want to thank Legislator Schneiderman for continuing to keep the health of our residents on the top of his mind," said County Executive Steve Bellone. "Lyme disease, babesiosis and other tick-borne illnesses are real concerns. I am confident that this committee will help produce practical recommendations to help address this issue."

The committee consists of 12 members, including Chairman Dr. Jorge Benach, director of the Center for Infectious Diseases and Distinguished Professor of Molecular Genetics & Microbiology at Stony Brook University. Dr. Benach was designated by Dr. James Tomarken, the Commissioner of Suffolk County Department of Health Services.

The Tick Control Advisory Committee will consist of the following members:

- Dominick Ninivaggi, director of division of vector control.
- Dr. Ilia Rochlin, laboratory director of division of vector control, representing Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone.
- Brian Kelly of East End Tick & Mosquito Control representing Suffolk County Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory.
- Jason Hann, legislative aide, representing Suffolk County Deputy Presiding Officer and Legislator Jay Schneiderman.
- Gwynn Schroeder, legislative aide, representing Suffolk County Legislator and chair of the legislature's Public Works & Transportation Committee Al Krupski.
- Dr. John Rasweiler, representing Suffolk County Legislator and chair of the legislature's Health Committee William Spencer.

- Nick Gibbons, representing Commissioner Greg Dawson of Suffolk County Parks & Recreation.
- Jeremy Samuelson, executive director of Concerned Citizens of Montauk, representing an environmental advocacy group.
- Dr. Scott Campbell, health professional.
- Shelter Island Supervisor James Dougherty, representing the East End Supervisory and Mayors Association.
- Dan Gilrein, representing Cornell Cooperative Extension.

In 2013, Legislator Schneiderman sponsored a resolution that requires the division of Suffolk County Vector Control to submit a yearly plan to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses. Under Schneiderman's legislation, the yearly Suffolk County Vector Control plan would include a section on the steps being taken to reduce the incidence of tick-borne illnesses. This section will also include the work to be done, the methods to be employed and methodologies to determine the effectiveness of the program.

"I applaud Legislator Schneiderman's effort to get suggestions on possible tick control measures from his advisory panel," said Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory. "Tick-borne diseases are a serious health concern across Suffolk County but especially in Legislator Schneiderman's district."

There are multiple types of tick-borne illnesses in Suffolk County including Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Babesiosis and Ehrlichiosis. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports 300,000 yearly cases of Lyme disease.

"Ticks and the diseases they transmit are clearly a problem in Suffolk County and in many regions of our country," said Dominick Ninivaggi. "We are researching what is needed to better understand the problem and what we can do from a practical point of view to address the issue. Any actual control efforts will have to pass a thorough environmental review."

In the late 20th century, Lyme disease, or Lyme borreliosis, was recognized as an important emerging infection. Since its identification nearly 30 years ago, Lyme disease has continued to spread. There have been an increasing number of cases in the Northeastern and North Central parts of the United States.